

## THE SCOTTS

The Scotts, from whom we are descended in the male line, originally came from the Border Country of Scotland. They were a branch of the Scotts of Harden who were notorious in the early part of the 17th century for their cattle raids on Northern England or on those Scottish neighbours with whom they were at odds.

The mistress of the household at that time. The Flower of Yarrow, so named for her graceful beauty, was accustomed when her larder was low to have the great meat dish brought to the table before the family at dinner and then raising the cover reveal a pair of spurs: a hint to the menfolk to mount their horses and refurbish her stores.

Her eldest son, Will Scott, returning from a raid into England across the lands of Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank and collecting a few more cattle on his way was surprised by Sir Gideon's retainers, overpowered and brought to Sir Gideon's castle on the Tweed.

When they came to tell Sir Gideon, Deputy Treasurer of Scotland and Warden of the Marches, of their success, he was sitting with his wife. On his exclaiming that the captive should be hanged forthwith, she took her husband aside. 'What a waste' she said 'Here we have three unmarried daughters and the youngest so ugly that she has little chance of a husband and there outside a fine young man and heir to a good estate. Give him the choice of marrying your youngest daughter or the rope'.

Sir Gideon accepted the good sense of this suggestion and placed the alternative before his captive. Now Will Scott was famed as the handsomest man on the Border, while Sir Gideon's youngest daughter was known throughout the neighbourhood as "Muckle-moued Meg" because of her huge mouth, so without more ado, he refused her as a bride.

Three days were allowed to him to change his mind. On the third day as he was led to the oak tree from which he was to be hanged he passed a ground floor room of the castle and through the window came the sounds of a woman weeping as though her heart would break. On asking who was within, he was informed that it was "Muckle-moued Meg". He was so moved by her distress and by the realization of what a terrible wound it would be to her self esteem and her reputation if it were known that a man had chosen to die rather than marry her that he halted his captors and told them that he would accept the honour of her hand.

Sir Gideon was fetched post haste and, being a cautious man, had the marriage contract drawn up and signed on the parchment of the nearby drum on which the tattoo was to be beaten as his prisoner dangled from the oak.

Some say that it was the prospect of a rope about his neck which aroused Will Scott's chivalry nevertheless the marriage proved a long and happy one.

After the Union of England and Scotland in 1707 the opportunities for cattle raids into England were greatly diminished. Our ancestors therefore moved to the County of Angus.

The first written record of the family in that county is on a tombstone in the Churchyard of Kirkden Lethen near Forfar erected in memory of David Scott (born 1715 died 1772). He had 3 sons and 7 daughters.

The 6th daughter Margaret (Peggy) Scott was companion to Lady Panmure. When Sir Walter Scott paid a visit to them and found Peggy Scott was related to him he presented her with his walking stick.

David Scott farmed at Mildens near Forfar and was no doubt succeeded by his eldest son, Robert, for his second son (born 1756) also named David, took over a farm at Newton Angus in Perthshire. When this David retired, after the death of his wife in 1824 he left the Newton Angus farm to his eldest son and went to live with his younger son Robert, my great grandfather (b. 1795) who had returned to Angus and taken over Balwyllo Farm near Brechin.

Robert Scott must have been an able and energetic man for he acquired another farm, Ballnyllo, making with Balwyllo more than 1000 acres, and ran 3 other farms as factor (agent) for the Earl of Southesk. He founded with the Earl of Southesk the Polled Angus (now Aberdeen Angus) Herd Book.

His home was at Balwyllo where, about 1820, he built a substantial house of dark grey stone on a hillside slope looking over the water meadows to the estuary of the South Esk river. He kept - and his widow after him - open house. The saying was that 'Its aye Yule at Balwyllo'. But he had little time to sit still. He always had three horses in use. The story has come down that he grew impatient at a meal continuing too long and when the cheese came in he called 'Wha's for cheese? I'm for nane'. Then rapidly passing around the guests 'And you and you and you? Lassie tak it awa'.

He died of appendicitis in 1843, aged 48, leaving behind 6 sons and 4 daughters outlived by his own father who died in 1846, aged 90.

His widow (née Susan Lyall) farmed Balwyllo and Ballnyllo until her death in 1881, aged 79. She was aided at first by her eldest son James and then by her third son Robert but there was consumption in the family. James died in 1851, aged 29 and Robert in 1855, aged 27 and thereafter she relied on a farm manager.

Her second son David was apprenticed in Brechin to a famous doctor Alexander Guthrie and completed his medical training in Edinburgh. He joined the East India Army Medical Corps as Surgeon Officer and reached India just in time to treat the wounded at the battle of Chillianwallah Jan. 1849. He was a keen sportsman and naturalist and was made a Fellow of the Zoological Society. While tiger shooting a gun burst and he lost his right hand. During the Indian Mutiny he was at an outlying military station at Hansi when early on May 29th 1857 he was warned by a sepoy whom he had befriended that the regiment was going to mutiny at 11 o'clock that day. He sent a messenger whom he could trust to the adjacent married quarters to tell as many women as could be reached to collect at his compound with all speed and guided the twenty women and children who arrived, through various hazards, to the territory of a Rajah friendly to the British.

All those who had ignored his warning were massacred. He then joined the forces besieging Delhi and was put in charge of the Medical Stores. When Delhi was captured the last Mogul Emperor, then aged about 80, was handed over to his keeping. The

Emperor, as a token of his esteem presented him with a large ruby set in a gold ring. This descended to my father who gave it to my mother. Tripping up - I think - in the conservatory at the first house I can remember, The Shrubbery, Bromley, she fell and the ruby striking the tiled pavement was flawed. She left it to my youngest sister, Leslie Murray-Threipland.

My great grandparents 4th & 6th sons emigrated to Australia. The 4th son John died of consumption in 1858 aged 28 but the 6th son Lyall, survived until he was 52, dying in 1887. He became an M.P. of the New South Wales Parliament. There were no descendants of these two.

My great grandparents eldest daughter, Helen, married Colonel Guthrie. Her husband was a very influential man, Factor to the Earl of Dalhousie and first cousin to his wife the Countess.

Ever since Sir David Guthrie had built Guthrie Castle in the 15th century his many descendants had spread over the County of Angus as doctors, ministers, farmers, merchants and members of the Armed Forces. Within two generations of arriving from the Borders the Scotts had married into the most powerful family in the area. Subsequently this connection was to have considerable influence on the future of our branch of the Scotts.

Alexander Guthrie the 5th and youngest son of a farmer near Brechin set up as a trader in Singapore in 1821, two years after the Island had been formally claimed as a British possession by Sir Stamford Raffles.

Ten years later as his business expanded he returned to Scotland and took back with him to Singapore his 17 year old nephew James Guthrie. Six years later, in 1837, that nephew had become his junior partner. When 7 years later James Guthrie, in turn, returned to Brechin on leave, he fell in love with Susannah Scott, my great grandparents 2nd daughter and after a short courtship married her on Aug. 26th 1846 and returned with her to Singapore. James was 32, Susannah 21. Alexander Guthrie only waited to instal the young couple in the large house he had built against their coming and to attend the birth and baptism of their first child Susan before he returned to London to manage the affairs of the Company at that end, leaving James in full control of the Singapore office.

Guthrie was now one of the leading firms in Singapore and the head of the firm was inevitably involved in public affairs and in the struggle of the Singapore merchants to release their island from the dead hand of the East India Company's rule from Calcutta. Although Alexander Guthrie had sent out to him an assistant, James Greenshields, in 1845, promoted to junior partner in 1849, the pressure on James Guthrie, both public and domestic was very great. Like three of her brothers, Susannah had in her the seeds of consumption. Both after the birth of her second daughter in 1849 and her son in 1850 she had nearly died and was now ailing and often lonely because of her husband's many official engagements. By an imaginative gesture he sent for Thomas Scott, 5th son of my greatgrandparents and my grandfather to come and join his sister and learn the business.

At the age of 19 my grandfather arrived in Singapore on July 7th 1851 after a voyage of 193 days. He was brown haired and of slight build taking after his father and had inherited his father's energy, liveliness and determination. In a very short time he had learnt Malay, joined the Singapore Volunteers, spend a brief stint working at Bousteads, another merchant house, to gain outside experience and brought light and laughter to his sister's few remaining years. She died giving birth to her fourth and stillborn baby in 1853. She was 27.

James Guthrie remained in Singapore until 1856 to enable his junior partner to take the leave due to him after his 10 years service abroad. James Greenshields first acts on reaching Scotland were to visit his Senior partner's home in Brechin and to pay a call on Susannah and Thomas Scott's mother at Balwyllo.

There he met, admired and on July 15th married Thomas Scott's youngest sister Margaret. He was 30, she 18.

During his absence my grandfather had the opportunity of working closely with his brother-in-law James Guthrie and must have earned his respect for as soon as James Greenshields and Margaret had arrived in Singapore and settled in, James Guthrie in 1856 left Singapore for good, to work with his uncle Alexander in London and with his consent to appoint my grandfather a partner in Guthrie & Co. Singapore.

In 1857 when this occurred my grandfather was 25 and from that time until his death 45 years later he was the driving force behind the expansion of the firm.

In the early days he and James Greenshields, already a partner and now his brother-in-law, worked together but sadly Margaret had the same malady as her sister Susannah. After presenting her husband with a son and 2 daughters she died giving birth, still born, to her 4th child. She was only 26. Greenshields never recovered from this blow. It would appear from his death certificate that he took more and more to drink to lessen his loneliness and sorrow. In 1867 my grandfather, although a younger man and with fewer years of service with the firm was appointed senior partner. 3 years later Greenshields resigned and in 1873 died of chronic hepatitis.

With the passing of Greenshields there remained as partner to my grandfather only James Watson who had been promoted from Warehouse Manager to partner in 1863 and so it remained until the mid 70's when in quick succession there were added as partners John Glass in 1874 and Alexander Johnstone in 1875.

The reason for this rapid increase was the enormous growth of business resulting from the completion of my grandfather's crowning achievement the construction of the Tanjong Pagar Docks.

When my grandfather first arrived in Singapore piracy in the narrow waters leading to its harbour had become a growing menace. Slow sailing ships or ships becalmed went in constant danger of being attacked by faster Chinese Junks or by those manned by oarsmen. Their crews were slaughtered and their freight seized. The East India Company did indeed send out a steampship to provide defence but as there were no facilities in Singapore for careening



and refitting it would disappear to India for many months for these purposes and the pirates would take advantage of its absence.

It is said that very soon after my grandfather had arrived in Singapore he began to try and interest those he met in the idea of building a dry dock. Facing the port and roadstead of Singapore was the land at Tanjong Pagar bought for Guthrie & Co. many years ago by Alexander Guthrie with its great ledge of rock and sand running out into the Eastern end of the harbour, a perfect site for the project. But steam was still in its infancy and he was only a young man newly arrived. However before he returned home on his first leave in 1860 he had inspired the Settlement Engineer, Colonel Collyer, with his enthusiasm and had persuaded him to inspect the area and rough out a plan. With this in his pocket to show to James Guthrie in London he obtained his consent to push ahead.

On his return to Singapore in 1861 he arranged a series of conferences among the business community and finally, when news reached Singapore early in 1863 that work had begun on the Suez Canal he convened a formal meeting of all those interested in the business of shipping and created a working committee of which he was appointed Secretary. This shortly afterwards became the Directorate of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company Ltd. which issued its prospectus on Sept 1st 1863.

On Oct. 17th 1868 the first dry dock, named Victoria, was formally opened by the Governor of the Straits Settlement. A second dry dock was opened in 1879 and under the guiding hand of my grandfather Tanjong Pagar became the greatest port in the Eastern

Hemisphere. So much so that, for political and strategic reasons the British Government compulsorily acquired it in 1905. My grandfather had been and my grandmother, as his inheritor after his death in 1902, should have been one of the largest shareholders in the Company but she was persuaded by John Anderson, the surviving partner and half-owner of Guthrie & Co. to sell fifty per cent of her shares to that Company shortly before the compulsory purchase took place. Each of the original shareholders received a hundred times what his investment had cost.

My grandfather left Singapore in 1883 to set up in London the firm of Scott & Co. to deal with that end of Guthrie & Co's business which had been handled by James Guthrie, who, as he was approaching 70, wished to retire.

My grandfather's departure was the signal for a number of valedictory testimonials, from the Municipality, the Chamber of Commerce, the European merchants of Singapore and above all from the Chinese Community with whom he had always maintained the closest relations. It was this community which presented to the Town Hall the portrait of him which they had commissioned. To him personally they gave the painting on silk of the large carp which is now at Huish. The following excerpts from their testimonial encapsulate both my grandfather's achievements and illuminate his character.

"It is now ten years since one of the largest assemblages ever known of the Merchants of Singapore met in the presence of the Governor of the Colony, and of the entire community to witness the presentation to you of a

service of plate as a token of the recognition of your valuable services as the Chairman of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company Ltd..... In other matters of public importance and in other public capacities you have always freely given your time and assistance for the benefit of the community who have for many years given you their full confidence and trusted you to look after their interests. When this settlement became a Colony and a Legislative Council was appointed, you were one of the unofficial members of that Council..... You have been one of the very few Honorary Police Magistrates appointed by Government. You have been and are now a Member of the Municipality elected by the ratepayers and as Municipal Commissioner you have been and are now Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Exchange..... But it is not only, nor is it principally, in such public or official duties that you have earned our great esteem and regard; for the native Community look to you as a sure and sympathizing friend in all cases of oppression, injustice or trouble. The number of instances in which you have ungrudgingly sacrificed your time, in the midst of important duties, to assist any person who applied to you, no matter how poor or insignificant he was, can only be known to yourself. And your kindness to, and consideration for, others has caused you to be so widely known and respected that your name among the natives is a watchword for kindness and integrity and your advice and assistance more valued than that of

any other person in this place. You leave Singapore with the name of one who never refused to listen to a poor man's trouble nor saved yourself any personal inconvenience or its consequences in the endeavour to assist him".

By the time of his final departure from Singapore - he only returned there once again for a short visit in 1899 - his mother had died, the farms in Scotland had changed hands and he had bought a handsome Georgian house "Auchenreoch" at Edzell, a few miles from his old home and a London house in Seymour Place W.1.

It was in 1860 that he met his future wife. Among the first class passengers on the P & O paddle steamer on which he was travelling home on leave after nine years abroad there was also a Capt. McNair, his wife and 2 daughters. The 9 year old elder daughter Elizabeth was a lively black haired little beauty who, during the long voyage, attached herself to him tormenting and enchanting him by her demands for hide and seek and all the other childish diversions to wile away the tedium of the journey. A shipboard friendship with the McNairs ripened into intimacy when they met again in Singapore and in 1869 my grandfather aged 38 married Elizabeth McNair aged 17. My father was born in 1870 thus mingling the lowland blood of the Scotts with the highland blood of the McNairs to whose history I will now turn.

## THE McNAIRS

The McNairs are a branch of the Clan McFarlane whose lands lie along the western shore of the North end of Loch Lomond. South of them were the Colquhouns with whom they were in perpetual feud.

A Duncan McNair b. 1675 married Mary Fleckfield heiress of an old Glasgow family. Their son, Robert, by inheritance and industry during a long life had become when he died in 1779 the largest property owner in Glasgow. Unfortunately his grandson, also named Robert, my great, great grandfather was left an orphan after the early deaths of his parents and by the time he was able to understand such matters his trustees had absorbed or dissipated his patrimony and absolved themselves of their responsibility by placing him in the office of a lawyer in Edinburgh. Finding this excessively irksome he persuaded his aunt, who was well connected, to write to the Duke of York, then head of the Army, explaining his misfortune and pleading that he might be given an ensigncy. This was granted and in gratitude my great grandfather was christened John Frederick Adolphus after the Duke. The name Frederick has continued in this family to the present day but the Adolphus has been dropped.

The young Robert McNair went out with his regiment to Canada in 1812 and was taken prisoner by the Americans at the battle of Buffalo. The only recollection of his captivity preserved in the family is that he was fed on pork and molasses. When Napoleon escaped from Elba his regiment, to which he had returned after an exchange of prisoners was hurriedly called back to Europe but only reached Belgium three days after the

battle of Waterloo had been fought and won. Thereafter he spent the rest of his life at the War Office, dealing with pensions and recruitment. He married a widow named de Lisle. Her reputation has descended in the family as a lady of keen perception and sharp wit. It was her habit to use rhymed verse when writing to friends. Of these the only one that has survived is the following:

I send you a thimble for fingers nimble  
I hope it will fit when you try it.  
It will last for long if its half as strong  
As the hint you gave me to buy it.

By her he had 2 sons and a daughter.

The elder son, my great grandfather Adolphus McNair was born in 1829 and lived until 1910. In 1846, at the age of 17 he arrived in Madras as an Ensign in the East India Company Army. 'He was' writes one author 'one of those young men of whom there were so many in the history of India who had the resolution to leave home when almost schoolboys (and whose parents were brave enough to let their boys go) at a time when life in India was far different from what it is now: when such a voyage was a matter of many months and when a return home was a very distant and perhaps unlikely event'. 'He was' writes another author 'one of those rare persons who, though attracted by women and attracted to them was also popular with men: dark haired, handsome and brilliantly alive'.

On arrival in Madras he was placed in command of a battery of artillery. 'When he first went on parade' my father who heard many of his reminiscences writes 'it was with some trepidation. The soldiers in

in the 1840's were a hard bitten lot. Sure enough as he rode down the lines someone in the ranks behind him began whistling. What was he to do ? He turned and facing them called them to attention. "Men" he said "many of you are old enough to be my father. But I'm your officer and until you learn to behave as a battery of her Majesty's Royal Artillery there will be drill morning and evening". And so there was and he soon had them under proper control. But he made a point of visiting the living quarters of their wives and families, seeing to their comforts generally and encouraging them to brighten their gardens with the flower seeds he provided.'

Soon after his arrival he presented a letter of introduction to a high up civilian in Madras. As it was in Race Week Madras was crowded and there was no room in the main house, so my great grandfather and another subaltern were sent to an outlying bungalow to sleep. They began to unpack their night shirts when there came a rattle at the closed shutters and a voice shouted 'Pyjamas, pyjamas'. My great grandfather took no notice and presently he heard the rattle and the cry 'Pyjamas, Pyjamas' repeated on the other side of the house where his companion was. There had been much talk at dinner about the increase of gang robberies so his companion burst into his room with a sword in his hand, declaring that 'Pyjamas, Pyjamas' must be the watchword of such a gang and that if they came again he was going to thrust his sword through the shutters. Sure enough there again came the rattle and the cry whereupon his companion thrust his sword to the hilt through the shutters. There was an agitated rustle and cry outside and then no more. But when they went to the big house for breakfast

their hostess met them gravely. 'My butler tells me you nearly killed him last night. I sent him down with night things in case you lacked them and he was nearly run through with a sword '. It was a long time before they were allowed to forget the story of 'Pyjamas, pyjamas'.

In 1850 at the age of 21 he married the daughter of John Payne, an English merchant in Madras, and his French wife née Desgranges. Although his wife was christened Sarah he always called her 'Lily' and she was known in the family as 'Tiger' Lily because of her flashing eyes.

In 1853 Captain McNair, as he had now become, was ordered to take a detachment of Madras Native Artillery from Madras to Malacca on the sailing ship Zaphathpaaneah. Winds had failed or been contrary and water was running short. The older people took beer to leave more water for the children. At dawn the native sailors could be seen licking dew off the masts.

My great grandfather was emphatic that the ship should seek for water at Acheen, Sumatra, north of which she was now becalmed. The captain, alleging fear of pirates, refused. Relations between them were already strained. The captain of the ship had a large white savage dog which was a menace to the community on board. One day the dog sprang at the First Officer and bit him in the arm. The officer managed to shake the dog off and it fell into the sea. The Captain at once ordered a boat to be lowered to rescue it. For my great grandfather, who had been exasperated by the trouble the dog had caused, this



last attack was the final detonator. He ordered the sentry, who, as always when soldiers were on board, was on sentry go to shoot it, which was done in spite of the Captain's protests.

So as the two captains walked up and down the quarter deck arguing the boats' destination the dispute grew very hot. Below the break of the deck sat one of the sergeants' wives who could hear the argument and each time Capt. McNair turned above her she called out 'Go it sir, go it sir'. Finally my great grandfather formally ordered the Ship's Captain to make for Acheen and water. 'And' he added 'If you refuse I shall have you put in irons and place the First Officer in command'.

At this the Captain gave up, made for Acheen and replenished the water tanks. The rest of the voyage to Malacca was uneventful but the Zaphathpaaneah after starting on her next voyage was never heard of again.

In Malacca my great grandfather made friends with J.B. Westerhout who was well known among the up country natives. He used to go long journeys with him into the interior and as my great grandfather had been a student of Geology he collected and sent to the Government in Calcutta specimens of various metals he had found on these expeditions. He also made a collection of wood and resins native to the country which were sent to the Government in Madras.

He had been scarcely a year in Malacca when he was sent to take command of the Artillery in Labuan, Java. Conditions in Labuan were very primitive and my great grandfather put a packing case on wheels and harnessed bullocks to it as a conveyance for his wife.

One morning in Labuan while the elder children (one being my grandmother) were having breakfast with their parents one of them got up but promptly fell down and couldn't rise. The others got up to help her and equally promptly collapsed. It was found later that their Chinese cook, fearing he was about to be dismissed, had procured a love philtre and administered it at breakfast. While my great grandfather was stationed in Labuan he made a visit to Borneo where the Governor, like himself, was a keen conchologist. Together they made a valuable collection of shells which were later placed in the British Museum.

In 1856 he was called to Singapore to act as Adjutant to the Artillery in the Straits Settlements. He had not been long in Singapore before he was appointed Private Secretary and ADC to the Governor equivalent to what would now be Colonial Secretary; for all the correspondence of the Government passed through his hands.

In 1857 he was appointed Executive Engineer for the Straits Settlement and also Superintendent of Convicts. This involved the charge of all public works and what was equally important of the Criminal Gaol holding within its very insecure walls some 3000 prisoners from India and Ceylon, shipped there by the East India Company who, until 1867, were the distant and uninterested administrators of the Straits Settlements. Captain, now Major, McNair had learned Hindustani in India and spoke it well. Able to communicate with the prisoners in their own tongue he acquired a remarkable personal influence over them. He organized them into gangs under petty officers drawn from their ranks and trained them as artificers in various trades to

carry out public works as other labour was scarce. During his term of office many of the long roads across the island of Singapore were made by the convicts and as their skill improved he was able with their labour to build St. Andrew's Cathedral and later Government House. While he was on leave in England 1860/61 he learnt photography so that he might teach others to take and file pictures of convicts and introduced it in the Government service in Singapore and later in Penang when he became Resident there. The time came when he was able to manage the vast concourse of convicts with the assistance of only one European warder and the petty officers he had chosen. When he retired he wrote a book on his experiment called 'Prisoners their own Warders' which was published in London in 1899.

During his leave 1860/61 he took a Sapper course at Woolwich with a view to the position of Colonial Engineer which he was given in 1867 when the Straits Settlement became a Crown Colony instead of being under the control of India. It was at Woolwich that, in his spare time, he took lessons in photography from an old man who had a shop in the town. He had nearly finished the course when his teacher had to go to London one afternoon and, assuring my great grandfather that there would be nothing to do, begged him to look after the shop while he was away. He agreed and for some time nothing happened. Then a servant girl came to have a likeness taken for her young man. This was dealt with successfully. Time went on and my great grandfather hoped that his responsibilities were at an end when in came a lady and gentleman with a dog they wanted photographed. This, in those days with the preparation of the plates and the long exposure, was a difficult business with an animal as the subject and so my great grandfather decided

to take a second exposure. Putting his head in and out of the black velvet cloth and occupied with the dog he hadn't paid much attention to the owner so he was startled when the gentleman came up to him and said in a low voice 'My dear McNair, has it come to this?' But all was explained.

In 1868 he went on an expedition to Bangkok to view an Eclipse and was entertained by the King of Siam and he, in turn when the King visited Singapore acted as his host. He was presented by the King with the Order of the White Elephant of Siam, which he was permitted to accept, and also with a pair of Siamese figures carved in gold. My great grandfather greatly admired them; but being forbidden as a civil servant to accept any gift, enquired of the Treasury what was their value so he could pay it and retain the figures. The reply came that he must send in the figures themselves, he could not buy them. Suspecting what lay behind this and determined that his friend the King should never see his personal present in the possession of another, he sent a Chinese boy for a hammer and smashed up the figures into lumps of gold which he then sent to the Treasury. When he next saw the Governor, Sir Harry Ord and told him what he had done 'You Goth' cried the Governor 'I was going to buy them myself'.

In 1875 my great grandfather was sent as Chief Commissioner to Perak, one of the Malay states, where there had been an outbreak of trouble. When all had been sorted out he returned, bringing with him a gashed mackintosh, the spear thrown from the jungle which had pierced it and a very bad form of malaria which ultimately was the cause of his being invalided home.

During the interval he had been Resident in Penang, another Malay State. One story told about him which spread through the settlements was about the Penang Bandstand. It had been talked about for many years but always postponed. It was to be erected by public subscription and a meeting was called of wealthy Chinamen over which my great grandfather presided and strongly urged immediate action. There was some hesitation and a leading Chinaman said 'Musti fikir' (Malay for must consider it). 'Fikir' cried my great grandfather 'Fikir! Kala kita mau fikir saja Penang suda rossa. Musti bust, bust, bust!' (Consider, consider. If we only consider Penang is done for. We must act, act, act). He got his bandstand straightaway.

During his long retirement he wrote in collaboration with another retired civil servant 'Fairy Tales of the Indus'.

My mother who often saw him during his latter years told me that he was a man of greater charm than any she had ever met. He attended my christening in 1906 but I was too young to remember. I still have the Bible he presented to me on that occasion.

He had 3 children, Elizabeth who at the age of 17 was married to my grandfather, Grace who having remained a spinster until she was 40 then married twice and outlived both her husbands and Arthur, born many years after his sisters, who rose high in the Indian Civil Service and sired 4 boys and a girl. For years he and his father corresponded in Persian.

Elizabeth McNair my grandmother was born in the Bay of Bengal on Aug 2nd. 1851. There was no milk on

board so her early feeding was supplemented by her sucking a rag dipped in sugar and water. Her birth was registered in the Thameside parish where the ship moored at the conclusion of the voyage.

My grandmother sailed 3 times round the Cape of Good Hope before she was eight. The last voyage was in the company of her sister under the care of a lady going home, as her parents had to remain in Singapore. She remembered touching at St. Helena where the two things that remained vivid were the long steep climb up the cliffs by innumerable steps and the abundance of peaches.

When they arrived in London the children were taken care of by their grandparents. At the first meal, not having tasted fresh butter during the six months voyage they ate very heartily of bread and butter until they were checked by their grandfather quoting 'When thou sittest at meat with a ruler, put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite'. As the childrens' only experience of a ruler was a straight piece of wood they were much puzzled.

It is easy to forget, when remembering grandmothers in their old age, long widowed and, as the custom was, invariably in black that they were once young and admired and the centre of a family: for my grandmother was deemed a beauty.

A year after my father was born in 1870 my grandmother gave birth to a daughter Lilian and in 1873 Amy.

My grandfather at that time was much occupied with business so, as company for my grandmother, he invited her younger sister Grace to make her home with them. My father's earliest memories are of her being very bossy and of his preference for his Malay nurse.

My father's first public appearance was at the age of 6 when he took part as a page at the wedding of his mother's first cousin whose romance had blossomed under the following circumstances. In 1875 my grandfather, while driving a dogcart with a pair of skittish horses was thrown and injured his leg rather severely. To aid convalescence it was decided that he should go to Hong Kong on the 'Whampoa' of which the Captain, MacKenzie, was a great friend. My grandmother and her cousin Mary, whose father Colonel McNair of the Punjab Regiment had died some years before, accompanied him. The voyage was uneventful until they were about 30 miles from Hong Kong. The passengers were just finishing dinner when there was a tremendous crash and the vessel struck. After examining the damage it was thought safer to land the passengers on a small island known as the Gap Rock. This was done by boat, the ladies going first and then my grandfather on a stretcher. As my grandmother was still in evening dress and had some warmer clothes which, along with the photos of the children, she had snatched up from her cabin, she made several Chinese coolies hold up a screen of blankets while she changed.

The first officer, with a boat's crew, was sent off to give the news in Hong Kong. The passengers waited for about twenty four hours on the rock when tugs arrived from Hong Kong to rescue them. Two steamers had meanwhile passed but took no notice of

their distress signals; and they had to fire shots to keep some Chinese junks, possibly, pirates, at a distance.

One of the passengers was a Mr. Cross, a wealthy Hong Kong merchant. He was so impressed by the calmness of my grandmother and her cousin, that very shortly after he proposed to Mary and was accepted. Some months later this entailed a second trip to Hong Kong for the wedding.

In 1876 my grandmother took my father and his two sisters to Scotland to leave them with my great grandmother as it was considered wise to remove children from a tropical climate between the age of 6 and 11. It was while she was settling them in, that the portrait by Sir J. Watson Gordon, of the three generations which now hangs at Huish, was painted.

When he arrived in Scotland my father spoke more Malay than English and the first time he saw snow falling outside the window he rushed out of the house, calling to his sisters 'Goulah, goulah' the Malay for sugar but he was disappointed.

For the next five years he remained at Balwyllo. A school had been set up by local farmers who paid the 'dominie' in cash or kind. My father used to relate how he travelled to his lessons behind a farm hand on the back of a cart horse with a sack of oats slung across its withers for the teacher.

It was during his stay in Scotland that Lilian, elder of his two sisters, died. After the death of his grandmother he returned to Singapore and studied at the



Raffles Institute until such time as his parents left for England in 1863. Thereafter, until he went to Cambridge, his schooling was completed at Montrose Academy from his father's house at Edzell.

It was somewhat about this time that the great missionary drive of the Plymouth Brethren spread through the western world and beyond and embraced with its sombre creed - to abhor 'the pride of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the desire of the heart' - both my Scottish and Swedish grandmothers although they were as yet unknown to each other.

So anxious were his parents that he should be sheltered from the wicked devices of the world that, when he went to Cambridge, he was not allowed to live in College but resided with a tutor in the town and was cut off from other undergraduates, a lack of contact which, throughout his life, left him not at ease with his fellow men.

At Cambridge he took an Honours degree in Classics and then moved to Edinburgh University where he gained a first class Honours degree in Medicine. It was there he placed his mother's maiden name McNair before his surname as there were so many students called Scott that it made it easier for him to pick out his name in the various lists hung up on the notice board.

It was in Edinburgh that he met my mother Alice Nyström and it is to the Nyströms that I will now turn.

## THE NYSTROMS

My mother was born in 1869, the eldest child of Frederick Nyström and Elizabeth, daughter of George Startin. There followed in the family 6 more daughters, one of whom died young, interspersed by 3 sons. The information I have of my mother's family is much less than that of my father's family.

When, after leaving Oxford, I was for a short time on the Stock Exchange I was stopped one day in Threadneedle St. by a Mr. Williams, head of a well known stockbroking firm called Williams de Broe. He said my name had been mentioned to him and he had stopped me because we were related in that the mother of my 'Swedish' grandmother was a Williams. He told me that he had been working on the Williams' family tree and when I expressed interest, he said he would bring up a copy of it the following week and invited me to lunch to receive it. Unfortunately, during the weekend, before our engagement he had a heart attack and died.

However during our conversation which was somewhat prolonged he told me the Williams were descended from a remarkable woman in the reign of Elizabeth I. She was married to one of three landowners in South Wales who had adjoining estates. In due course her husband died. On her return from his funeral one of the two adjoining landowners asked her to marry him only to be told that his neighbour had already made the same request on the way to the church and had been accepted. However, after a few years, her second husband died and the unsuccessful suitor became her third husband. Her first two husbands had left no heirs so both estates came to her

but by her third husband, who predeceased her she had a son. He inherited the three estates.

From there Mr. Williams switched to the link between the Williams and the Startins which occurred when George Startin, my great grandfather on my mother's side married the daughter of a Williams who was Chief Clerk at the Bank of England.

The Startins originally came from Italy. According to the family tradition a young novice called Startini saw a beautiful English girl travelling through the streets of his native city in an open carriage with her parents while on the Grand Tour. He fell so madly in love with her on first sight that he found out her name, renounced his vows, followed her to England and eventually married her.

Over the years the family became integrated into English life. Startini was shortened to Startin and one of my mother's great uncles became a British Admiral. My 'Swedish' grandmother was one of a large family, not over rich and with numerous daughters. She met her Swedish husband, Frederick Nyström at a dance when he was visiting England and received his proposal by letter when he had returned to Sweden. Although their acquaintance had been short it had been agreeable. He came of good family - his uncle was Court Chamberlain to the Swedish Royal family - and was a landed proprietor while her parents had many daughters to be married. With her parents consent she accepted his proposal.

It is only from my mother's comments that I can piece together the pattern of their days. Even when I knew my 'Swedish' grandmother in her old age she was a

good looking woman and my mother as a little girl remembers her as beautiful and the gaiety and entertainments in the country house in which they lived.

Frederick Nyström had been brought up in affluence. His father was a remarkably handsome man and had married in 1836 an heiress Eva Rosenberg so that Frederick had not cultivated the habit of carefulness. As his family and expenses increased his funds diminished but the coup de grace was administered when his second son George came of age.

George Nyström had become the boon companion of young Wijk, the eldest son of a Swedish millionaire, when they were at University together. Their friendship was cemented when young Wijk, going with George to meet his youngest sister but one, Gunilla, on her way home from school at the age of 15 declared that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen and was going to marry her when she was of age. This he did when she was 17. She was the first of the many Nyström daughters to become a bride.

But the closer relationship with the Wijks was disastrous for George. He was caught up in the drinking and gambling parties of his brother-in-law with richer young men than himself. His gambling debts increased far beyond his means and at last he had to confess to his father their enormity which, as debts of honour, his father felt bound to pay. As my mother said to me 'The dowries of all the girls vanished, the country house was sold, we moved to a flat in Gothenburg and my father took up the post of manager of an insurance company'.

My mother, as the eldest of the family decided

to train as a nurse. She obtained a Certificate of Nursing at Bristol where one of her many aunts lived.

Within a short time of returning home she was made the head of a Convalescent home on an island off the coast of Sweden and had the honour of receiving a visit of inspection from the King of Sweden which may have had something to do with her uncle being the Commander of the Royal Palace Guards.

It was when she was staying with another aunt. Mrs. Forester, in Edinburgh that she first met my Father who had been invited to a lunch party at the house. She remembered him as being very lively and full of jokes. My father was at that time living in lodgings in Edinburgh, completing his training as a doctor. I asked my mother how, in that chaperoned period, she could tell whether he would make a suitable husband. She replied that on the rare occasions that they were able to take a walk together up St. David's Mount he told her that he read the Bible every evening and that every day of the week he ordered the same supper at his lodgings of a mutton chop and braised onion. This confirmed her opinion that he was a good man and certainly needed someone to look after him.

In due course my mother was invited to stay at my grandfather's house at Edzell, near Brechin, and my parents became engaged. In August 1898, a few months later, after my mother had already returned to Sweden my father, his sister and his mother crossed the North Sea to visit her parents in Gothenburg. Dagmar, the Nyström daughter next in age to my mother had also just become engaged to a Swedish pastor - and the two fiances found that Latin was the easiest language in which to talk to each other.

Apart from Gunilla, Dagmar was the only one of my mother's sisters to marry a Swede. In descending order of age Florence married a Scottish minister named Liddell, Leonie an English School Inspector named Coles and Eleanor, the youngest, a Dr. Milligan, Scottish by birth, but with a fashionable practice in Mayfair. Gunilla separated from her husband when he became an alcoholic and with her 2 sons and 2 daughters moved her home to England. When her husband died she married General Barnes and by him had one son who, tragically, was killed at the age of 19 in his first month of active service in North Africa.

Of my mother's brothers Frederick, the eldest, studied to become a doctor but died at an early age unmarried. Carl Gustave, the youngest, became a Sea Captain in the Swedish Merchant Marine, married a Swede and had several children. George, the middle son, contrived to make himself comfortable by marrying a wealthy Frenchwoman and had one daughter.

Early in 1899 my father qualified as a doctor and on Oct. 3rd in the same year my mother and father were married and embarked on a honeymoon which can seldom have been equalled in length. They returned from the Continent to England eighteen months later when my eldest brother Tom began to make his presence known.

My father received a handsome allowance from my grandfather and took the opportunity of his honeymoon to study under the most famous Professors of Medicine in Berlin, Vienna and Paris. In the spring of 1901 he and my mother set up house at No. 1 Harley St. London W.1. which my grandfather had bought for them.

Their residence there was brief. My grandfather had to undergo an operation on his prostate gland from which he never fully recovered. He died on June 26th 1902. A new career was now imposed upon my father to which I will refer when I turn to the McNair Scotts

## THE McNAIR SCOTTS

My grandfather was always very tender to my father. When he asked him if he wished to follow him in the firm my father replied that he had always felt drawn to medicine and was allowed, without argument, to proceed to its study. My father would indeed have made an admirable Professor with his capacious memory and power of exposition but I do not think that he had the interest in or impetus for general practice. If that had been his intention he should have set up his plate, not in London, but in Edinburgh where his brilliant academic achievements at the University were well known to the Medical hierarchy. His only patient during the brief period he was in Harley St. was a young man who slipped on ice outside the front door and broke his leg.

So perhaps it was as well that his continuing appetite for knowledge had not been transmuted into application by the time my grandfather died for my grandfather had nominated no-one to succeed him either in the firm of Scott & Co in London or of Guthrie & Co in Singapore and it became clear to my father when dealing with his father's estate that his mother's blind trust in John Anderson, the surviving partner in Singapore, could prove dangerous to the family interest. He decided to renounce his medical ambitions and to take an active part in the affairs of the two firms.

John Anderson was the son of a bankrupt Sea Captain who ended his turbulent career as Assistant Harbour Master in Singapore. He was educated at the Raffles Institute until he was 16 when he obtained employment



first in Government Service and then in the merchant firm of Bousteads.

His sister married Alec Johnstone who had become a partner in Guthrie & Co. By him he was brought to the notice of my grandfather and in 1876 was given a post in the Company. He arrived at an opportune time: a new area of trade was opening up for the merchants of Singapore.

As long as the East India Company had control of Singapore they had been forbidden any connection with the Sultanates in the Malay Penninsular, to the north of the island, for fear of getting entangled in the internecine feuds between them. After the British Government took over from the East India Company in 1867 it pursued the same policy until 1871. By then alluvial tin deposits had been found in Malaya. Enterprising individuals had won concessions and formed companies to exploit them. An avalanche of Chinese and South Indians had poured in to work them. There were clashes with the local inhabitants and many deaths. As a result the Governor of the Straits Settlements was instructed by the British Government to bring about the pacification of the Penninsular for the benefit of trade. This was eventually achieved, not without bloodshed, by the formation in 1896 of the Federated Malay States with a British Resident at the Court of each Sultan. Coffee planters followed tin miners and most important of all it was found that the seed of the rubber plant smuggled out of Brazil flourished abundantly in Malayan soil.

Anderson earned his partnership by the energy with which he obtained for Guthrie & Co. the agencies to act for the various companies operating in Malaya:

importing for them the manifold stores and machinery required for their business, selling for them their produce and arranging loans for their temporary needs. By 1900 Guthrie & Co. held 23 agencies.

Under the cautious guidance of my grandfather no shares had been taken up in the companies concerned and no land bought on Malaya. But in 1899 a coffee boom had collapsed, bankrupt coffee estates were going cheap, my grandfather, Anderson and a Chinese millionaire Lok Yew, bought jointly a 6000 acre estate in Perak, named Kamuning where the coffee shrubs had been interplanted by rubber trees as wind breaks. They had the vision to see that rubber was the crop of the future. By the time my grandfather died Anderson was already negotiating for further estates.

As soon as he heard of the death of my grandfather, the older man who had given him his opportunity, his guidance and his support and had always held his respect, he sailed for England. At that time he was a man of 50, handsome, pugnacious, touchy, ambitious and as my father had already surmised not altogether scrupulous. My mother, who detested him, said he won his way by gross flattery or persistent hectoring. He came with the proposition that the two firms Scott & Co. and Guthrie & Co should join forces in a Limited Liability company which would give them the flexibility and power of expansion to deal with what he saw as the great surge forward of rubber plantations, a belief my father shared as he had been one of the earliest and most enthusiastic of car owners.

After hard bargaining Guthrie & Co was registered on Feb. 28th 1903, capitalized at 1000,000 Straits Settlement dollars (approx. £100,000) half being held

by Anderson and half by the Scott family. In addition 300,000 dollars (£30,000) of debenture were to vest in the Scotts. My father was appointed nominal head of the London office with power of attorney from Anderson. Anderson was made Governing Director of the whole concern for his lifetime: a clause, against which my father fought very hard but had to accept since my grandmother, coaxed into acquiescence by Anderson's flattering attentions, to which she was susceptible, had, as legatee shareholder from my grandfather, the final decision.

My father was not a gregarious man but to all whom he met, whatever their station in life, he gave the same courteous attention. He had an air of innocence and this evoked, in varying degrees, two different responses, a sort of protective affection or a propensity to take advantage of his apparent simplicity. When he took over the London Office the staff, chosen by my grandfather, gave him great loyalty and wise advice. Unfortunately the Singapore office was not so helpful. There Anderson had made a disastrous appointment.

My grandfather had always maintained the closest ties with the Chinese community. He realized that they were the middlemen of the Far East and that their grapevine spread from China to Ceylon. Those of them who came into his service could work their way up to the highest posts in the administration.

Shortly after my grandfather died the Investment Manager of the Singapore branch retired. His deputy, a Chinaman named Lim Toon Kye had every reason to expect to take his place, but Anderson, instead, brought in over his head a protégé of his called Macmillan.

The Chinese community closed like a clam. A source of vital information on the vagaries of trade and the rise and fall of commodities ceased to flow. Lacking local knowledge, shunned if not actually misled by the Chinese, Macmillan was soon in difficulties. Rumour reached my father that Macmillan was drinking heavily and speculating on his own account. My father wrote to Anderson, then in Singapore, of his anxieties and either received no reply or was told in so many words that a newcomer such as he should not question the judgment of the great and experienced Anderson. Finally the crisis came in 1909. Macmillan made a huge forward purchase of tin for the Company in expectation of a rise in price. Instead the market fell sharply. Guthrie & Co suffered heavy losses which seriously embarrassed them as banks became reluctant to advance them credit at the very time when they required increased funds to buy estates planted with young rubber preparatory to floating them on the London Stock Exchange.

My father and my grandmother, in spite of acrimonious correspondence with Anderson who forbade them to interfere, decided to sail to Singapore to question Macmillan in person about his outrageous speculation. They arrived in Singapore on March 20th to find that Anderson had packed Macmillan off into the unknown on a ship that left on March 18th.

A short and bitter exchange ensued in which Anderson conceded that my father should become a director of Guthrie & Co. with the same salary as himself. Anderson then departed for Scotland on April 12th on the grounds of ill health.

My grandmother was now thoroughly disillusioned and in future would wholly support my father in the struggle that was to follow.

My father remained in Singapore for six months and by the time he left the good standing of the company had been entirely restored as a result of the successful flotation of so many of the rubber estates it had acquired.

Since Dunlop invented the pneumatic tyre in 1889 and the motor car had arrived there had begun a growing demand for rubber which the 'wild rubber' from Brazil could not satisfy. Malaya was to provide the answer. In 1905 it exported 104 tons, in 1907, 902, in 1910 5000 and in 1914, 196,000 tons. A rubber tree takes 6 years from planting until it can be tapped and the viscous sap transmuted by various processes into the dry elastic sheets for export. It was only those estates where rubber had been planted in the early 1900's which reaped the full benefit of the rubber boom. By 1909 rubber was selling at 12/6d per lb. It was just such estates that Guthrie & Co had been acquiring.

Linggi, in 1905, was the first ever rubber company to be launched on the London Stock Exchange as a Limited Liability Company. This was carried out by Guthrie & Co. and my father was at first Director and later Chairman of the company. By 1909 the 2/- shares had reached 70/-. In 1907 Guthrie & Co. floated Labu. In 1909 United Sua Betong, Kamuning, Sendayan, Tangkah and Bukit Kayang. In 1910 Kimanis, Cheviot, Port Dickson and United Temiang. On most of these companies my father was either Director or Chairman. In every

case Guthrie & Co. had the sole rights of buying and selling and 2½ commission on every transaction. Prosperity for Guthrie & Co. seemed assured.

Meanwhile the dispute between Anderson and the Scotts continued intermittently with Anderson trying by various devious means to oust the Scotts. In the 1913 accounts which he submitted to the Registrar of Companies in Singapore there was a resolution to pay his director's salary but no resolution to pay that of my father. Hitherto one Director's signature to company accounts had been accepted by the Registrar but a local ordinance had recently increased the requirement to two. The accounts were returned for the signature of a second director. At that time my father was the only other Director and he refused to sign until the missing resolution was made good. Anderson took no action. In the 1914 accounts he inserted resolutions to alter the Articles of Association which would have given him complete control of the Company and forwarded these accounts to the Registrar with only his signature. The Registrar again refused to accept them without the signature of a second Director. Again Anderson took no action. In 1916 he sent to the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlement a Petition to wind up Guthrie & Co. on the grounds that as the Company's accounts had not been registered for more than two years it could, by law, be forbidden to trade and in an accompanying Affidavit he stated that the failure to provide these accounts was due to the non-cooperation of my father. My father in turn sent in an Affidavit repudiating this charge and detailing the reasons why it had been necessary to refuse to sign the accounts. He was vindicated by the Court who threw out Anderson's Petition. Anderson was now forced to the only option left to him: to offer to buy out the Scotts.

Great Britain was in the midst of the 1914-18 war. Conscription was shortly to be imposed. My father, although 46 could expect that, in view of the growing shortage of medical staff, the time would come for him to be called up. He decided that the family should accept a realistic offer.

Negotiations did not take long. Anderson was impatient to gain control and was pushed up to what my father's advisers considered a most satisfactory figure. My father therefore accepted for the family £191,666: allocated as to £93,419 to my grandmother £67,317 to himself and £30,930 to his sister Amy (Mrs. Barlee married to a Tunbridge Wells doctor). He also had a guarantee, subject to the normal confirmation by shareholders at Annual General meetings, that he should retain all his existing directorships on the companies managed by Guthrie & Co. In the event he was to remain Director and later Chairman of these companies until he was over 80.

In hindsight there could not have been a better year than 1916 in which to sell. Rubber planting had continued throughout the war, especially in the Dutch East Indies. By the end of the 1914-18 war the total area in the Far East had risen to 4 million acres capable of producing 300,000 tons of rubber. Supply was outrunning demand. In 1917 the price of rubber had a notable drop. By 1920 it was down to 2/0 per lb. by 1921 to 9½d. In 1920 the Guthrie & Co. accounts showed a loss of £600,000.

In 1918 my father was called up, aged 48, and posted as a 2nd Lt. in the R.A.M.C. to a military hospital at

Park Camp, near Oswestry in Shropshire. He had continued to read the leading medical journals after leaving the profession and apart from missing his wife and children and, as the oldest officer in the camp being called 'Grandpa', he found great satisfaction in trying his hand again in his old art. I remember that when he came home on leave I had never seen him so carefree and light hearted.

He was released, soon after the war ended, and appointed by the Government to a Demobilization Committee which was stationed at 1st Army H.Q. in France and from there toured the Military Area during a very cold January in 1919 to give advice to officers on possible openings available after their demobilization.

It was, I think, in 1919 that he became a name at Lloyds and in the same year set up a Rubber Agency called Eastern Industries with two Irishmen named Coghlan and Donoghue, trained in the rubber industry, who had obtained options on several rubber plantations in Java. These were taken up by Eastern Industries and floated on the London Stock Exchange with my father as Chairman and Eastern Industries as agents. Labour costs in Java were considerably lower than in Malaya.

In 1922 my grandmother who for the last 18 years of her widowhood had resided in a handsome stucco terrace house in Tunbridge Wells with, as I remember, a Monkey Puzzle tree and a Mulberry tree in the garden, died. My father and his sister Amy benefited from her considerable fortune. We seemed at that time to be a comfortably off family. In 1916 my father had bought 'Borrans' a spacious house at Chobham, 2 miles from Woking with a large garden, tennis and croquet lawns



and 15 acres of paddocks, the whole girdled by a belt of trees and flanked on two sides by common land heaths; a paradise for children. By 1923 the staff had swelled to cook, kitchenmaid, housemaid, parlour maid, gardener, gardener's boy, chauffeur, nurse and governess. But it did not last. Sometime between 1922 and 1924 my father made a large forward purchase of rubber on margin.

I only came to know the story because in 1926, my second year at St. Johns College, Oxford, I won a Casberd Scholarship, the winner of which would only receive the money if his father's income was less than £1000 per annum. I could not understand how my father could have signed a paper to that effect and asked my mother. She told me of his speculation, that the price of rubber kept on falling, that he would not cut his losses and was having to pay out more and more money to prevent being sold up.

Finally, as she watched his funds draining away she, who loved him dearly and looked after him like an angel, besought him for her sake and that of his children to sell. He sold. His loss was around £60,000. If he had continued to hold on he would have been wiped out. By 1932 the price of rubber had fallen to 1½d per lb.

My father showed great skill and firmness in dealing with this crisis. Part of the debt he was able to repay with such liquid assets as he owned and by selling the house at Chobham and taking a short lease on a house in Cranleigh Gardens, London S.W.7.: the remainder by pledging to his creditors each year part of the income he derived from his director's fees and Lloyds Syndicates.

On the whole we, as children, were not conscious of evident signs of want. My mother still had a household staff. The heavy costs of our education were in the past. Two of us were earning our living. By 1934, I think, my father had cleared his debts for by 1936, when the lease of Cranleigh Gardens had expired he was able to buy a four bedroomed flat in Queens Gate Square and in the same year a small house named Crofts, set on a 'plat' of one acre in the midst of the great sweep of heathland known as the Ashdown Forest. By 1938 four of his children were married, 2 sons and 2 daughters.

My father had an encyclopaedic memory and a wide range of knowledge covering pictures, furniture, natural history, plants, literature, medicine, the classics, history and much else. As my sister, Leslie, wrote of him, quoting from the 18th century essayist, Steele, 'To know him was a liberal education'. He was a kind, gentle but reserved father. His emotions were taken up by my mother. As long as she was there he did not wish for other company, apart from his family. He made such a fuss about dressing up if they were asked out to dinner and such a fuss about returning hospitality that my mother gave up accepting such invitations. There was one exception to this aversion to meeting his neighbours. He had a passion for playing tennis. At 'Borrans' the croquet lawn was transformed into a second tennis court and my memory of boyhood summers there is of a succession of tennis parties and of my mother sitting at the tea table surrounded by white-frocked and white flanneled guests.

Unlike my father, my mother was fond of company but accepted his reservations and, as he went to London

several days a week, was able to entertain her local friends at tea. When my elder brother and sister and later myself grew up, nothing pleased her so well as when we asked our school or university friends to stay. She loved to have a full house. Perhaps because they were so much younger my father on these occasions became a genial host and there was much laughter.

I suppose it was when I became 16 that I realized my mother as a woman. Before that she was a comforter in distress, a responsive listener to one's tales of triumph, a guide in difficult situations. Always she was there warmhearted, welcoming and straight forward. Then coming back one holiday I saw what a wonderful upright carriage she had, her air of dignity, her graceful ankles and her fine boned gentle face which could, however, on rare occasions become that of an outraged Juno flashing lightning from her eyes.

When the 1939-45 war broke out my parent's flat was taken over by the Navy as accommodation for Wrens and they went to their house in Ashdown Forest. There, now both 70, they settled down to a Darby & Joan existence with my unmarried sister, Betty, coming to live with them for long periods at a time.

My mother was a dedicated gardener. Seed merchants catalogues were her favourite reading. The one acre 'plat' was taken in hand and made into an enchanting little kingdom. There was a tennis lawn for my father, who still played, and a series of enclaves, divided by privet or laurel hedges, for a flower garden with beds separated by gravelled paths, a rockery, a vegetable garden and a paddock for livestock, goats, hens, beehives and an occasional pony.

My mother and father had been collectors of furniture. Every time we, as children went off to our boarding schools, my father to lighten her sadness at our absence, would drive her to stay in a hotel, usually in the West Country and they would visit the antique shops in the towns through which they passed. With the best of the smaller pieces they furnished 'Crofts'. The remainder was warehoused during the war and later distributed among the children.

At 'Crofts' my mother was always occupied, with the garden, her knitting, her sewing, her embroidery and often with the cooking. Her bent was practical, my father's intellectual and artistic. He had built up a remarkable collection of Japanese tsubas (sword hilts) and spent much time cataloguing them in a series of black notebooks.

In 1949 they celebrated their golden wedding.

They continued to live in 'Crofts' until they were 83 when they moved to a suite of rooms, which they furnished with their own favourite pieces, in a Private Hotel at Crowborough. This they had chosen because of its large and productive kitchen garden. I remember my father walking slowly in that garden, stick in hand, with his beard which he said he had grown to save the effort of shaving, his thick coat, his muffler and hat talking to me of his childhood and I remember the farewell phrase he now always used when I left 'Haste ye back'.

He died in April 1957 in a Nursing Home in Crowborough after being bedridden there for several months during which time my mother moved into an adjacent

room to be near him. After his death she returned to the suite of rooms at the hotel which she had retained. She died peacefully early in 1958, a day after I had motored over to see her when I found her as loving, as interested as ever.

#### ENVOI

Between cock crow and matins bell,  
In a cool room of light and air,  
In a cool house beside the Yare,  
My father knew my mother well  
And I was well begotten there.

The church bells called across the plain  
'Come, people, to your prayers again'  
The sun above the stable crept  
And bird began to call to bird,  
Within the house the servants stirred:  
My father and my mother slept.

O happy sleep! O happy love!  
I see you as the years go by  
United still in constancy,  
Warm hearted each to each and proof  
Against the world's malicious eye.

Within that household calm and sage  
I crawled and stumbled, walked and ran  
Up the long steps that lead to man  
Until at last I reached the age  
of indiscretion and began  
My own unaided pilgrimage.

Ronald McNair Scott.